



EDUCATION
A KEY PLAYER IN GROWTH

ROZANA SANI

EDUCATION is a critical sector as it enables the nation to transform into a developed nation and progress in the digital economy.

From preschool, primary school, secondary school, tertiary and postgraduate, each level has a role to play in which talents will grow and be groomed.

Much of this year saw the early implementation of the National

Hazzirah Izzaati
(right) is the youngest PhD holder in the country.



Education Blueprint, which is a review of the education system to be carried out from 2013 to 2025.

The blueprint was developed in the context of rising international education standards and the government's aspiration of better preparing children for the needs of the 21st century.

The nation was rocked with news of the leak of the Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) examination papers — Science, English, Mathematics and Tamil Language — in September, which forced 478,848 Year Six pupils to resit them on

Sept 30, Oct 9 and Oct 30.

This incident had many questioning the emphasis put on obtaining As in exams, which may have been one of the reasons for the leak.

The Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) examination for Form 3, students was discontinued and replaced by Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 or Form Three Assessment (PT3).

Unlike previous years where PMR was held in October, secondary schools were given from July 1 to Oct 17 to hold the PT3 examination and assessment.

From July 1 to July 18, assessments were conducted for History and Geography via case studies instrument.

And the oral tests for Bahasa Melayu and English language subjects were fixed from Aug 6 to Aug 29. The period from Oct 12 to Oct 17 was fixed for schools to conduct written tests for Bahasa Melayu, English Language, Science, Mathematics, Islamic Education, Living Skills, Arabic, Chinese, Tamil, Iban and Kadazandusun language subjects.

In the early education area, as well as gifted and talented children development, efforts by Malaysia were commended through the recognition given to Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor who received the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Heroes Award at the United Nations headquarters in September.

The award was given at the international launch of the Global STEM Alliance, an initiative of the New York Academy of Sciences in partnership with governments, companies, non-governmental organisations and schools.

The alliance was formed to spearhead STEM education, key in



Maizura Mokhsein was the top debater at UADC.

generating the fuel needed to advance a science- and technology-driven global economy, in the world.

Maizura Mokhsein, 23, a final-year law student from Universiti Teknologi Mara, emerged as top debater at the United Asian Debating Championship (UADC) in Singapore earlier this year.

Maizura defeated 360 participants from universities in Asia by scoring top marks in all eight preliminary rounds. UADC is Asia's largest and most prestigious tournament and runs in the Asian parliamentary format, which pitches teams of three against each other.

Five public universities climbed up the ladder in the 2014 QS World University Rankings, organised by British company QS Quacquarelli Symonds.

Universiti Malaya continues to lead

local varsities, coming in at the 151st spot compared with 167th last year. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia moved up 10 spots from 269 to 259. The biggest mover, however, was Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, shooting up 61 spots to 294th from its 355th placing last year.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) moved up the ranks significantly, with USM leaping from 355 to 309, and UPM from 411th place to 376. Malaysia has five universities in the top 400, with three in the top 300.

UTM graduate Hazzirah Izzaati Mat Hassim, 24, of Kelantan, obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) in Mathematics, becoming the youngest PhD holder in the country.

This got her name in the Malaysia Book of Records.

Proficiency in English continues to be a concern, where university graduates are concerned, with Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announcing a new policy making English a mandatory pass subject at the university level.

With that, a higher score for Malaysian University English Test (MUET) for entry into public higher learning institutes will be introduced from next year. The minimum entry requirement now is MUET band 1.

The minimum MUET requirement will be increased according to fields of study: band 2 for arts and social sciences, band 3 for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (stem) courses and band 4 for law and medical courses.

Graduates must achieve band 3 for arts and social science, band 4 for STEM and band 5 for law and medicine.

"You are not disabled by your disabilities, you are abled by the abilities you have.... Cerebral palsy is just one part of me, it is not the whole of me."

23-year old wheelchair-bound Help University graduate **Rajvin Kaur Pall Singh** on receiving her second-class honours degree in communication from Help University at its 26th convocation.

